

**Millennial Views:
Premillennial, Postmillennial, and Amillennial**

Andrea Fisher

Bi 322 Apocalyptic Literature

Professor McCrum

December 02, 2017

I. Introduction

Thesis: The discerning of these themes is essential to understanding the significance of the Book of Revelation, and the doctrine of the three dominant millennium views which were held by multiple students of Scripture. These millennium views included amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism. The writer of the Book of Revelation wrote about these views to provide the framework for the reader to grasp an understanding of the Book of Revelation. In addition, to obtain knowledge of John's literary style and to get an understanding of the three theological views that has been debated for centuries. The purpose of presenting these views is by direct appeal as an advocate for the premillennial view.

- II. The Book of Revelations
 - A. Historical Background
 - B. Cultural Background and Contextual analysis
- III. Amillennial View
 - A. Define Amillennialism
 - B. Beliefs of the Amillennial View
- IV. Postmillennial View
 - A. Define Postmillennialism
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 - A. Define Premillennialism
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- VI. Conclusion- Support of Premillennialism

In Acts 1:6, Jesus was asked by His disciples, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom?"¹ In this particular kingdom, Jesus Christ is acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of Lords. This kingdom that the disciples probed into, is the same kingdom which believers, and much of humankind have desired for many decades. The kingdom that Christians aspire to reach for and search out information about is that of which is discussed in one of the books of the Bible; which is the last book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation. The Book of

¹ Acts 1:6, NIV.

Revelation presents an illustration of the millennial, which provides history about the 1000- year reign of Christ here on earth, and provides evidence about God's disclosure or communication of Himself to Believers. At the end of the Book of Revelation, the Tribulation has ended with the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments. In this time, Israel has experienced a rebirth, allowing Gentiles all over the world the opportunity to follow Jesus Christ. In the same time period, the antichrist and the false prophets were initially revealed, crushed and thrown into the Lake of Fire. Babylon, the system that opposes God was defeated, leading to the Armageddon. This led to Jesus coming again to the earth to reign as Lord and King.²

The Millennium mentioned in the Book of Revelation created notable controversy throughout the history of the Church.³ Recurring motifs persist throughout the Book of Revelation, which refers to the millennium. The discerning of these themes is essential to understanding the significance of the Book of Revelation, and the doctrine of the three dominant millennium views which were held by multiple students of Scripture. These millennium views included amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism. The writer of the Book of Revelation wrote about these views to provide the framework for the reader to grasp an understanding of the Book of Revelation. Also, to obtain knowledge of John's literary style and to get an understanding of the three theological views that have been the topic of debate for centuries. The purpose of presenting the three millennial views is by direct address as an advocate for the premillennial view.

The strategy to finding the veracity of Scripture is to uncover what the author originally meant. Unveiling the intended purpose of the text is accomplished by beginning with historical,

² John F. Walvoord, *Daniel* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2011).

³ T. L. Frazier, *A second look at the second coming: sorting through speculations* (Ben Lomond, CA: Conciliar Press, 1999) p. 144.

cultural and contextual analysis; which reveals essential information about the Biblical text. Data such as, when the text was written, who penned it, what was the circumstances surrounding the written work at the time the author was writing, and how would the targeted audience have understood the passages. The answers can be found through research and with the Scriptures itself.⁴ Additional insight into the historical context is ascertained in Revelation 1:9 which says, “I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”⁵

By way of this, we understand that the audience that John was writing to was under great persecution. This Greek style prologue addresses the suffering, and harassment, as a marginalized community of outsiders in a Greco Roman urban culture. John a Palestinian Christian who immigrated to Asia Minor, which would be modern day turkey today, composed Revelations in 95 AD when he was about 92 years old. At that time, he was a prisoner of on the remote desert penal colony of Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea. Held as a prisoner of Rome, John was on this island for his incessant preaching about Jesus.⁶ In *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, Fee asserts; “John’s message is to encourage the church not to capitulate it because Christ holds the keys to history, the future and eventually the wrath of God will be revealed against those who persecute the Church.”⁷

4 Roy Lee Martin. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Essential Keys for Interpreting the Bible, 1st Ed* (Miami: Gospel Press 2011).

5 Revelation 1:9, NIV.

6 Ben Witherington, *Invitation to the New Testament: first things* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

7 Gordon D. Fee, and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. p. 239

Another critical step in gaining insight into Revelation is by ascertaining the literary form. John's historical framework in Revelations encompasses pastoral letters written in the apocalyptic form, which is a type of Jewish literature that uses symbolic imagery that was very common to John and the readers he intended to address. "Apocalyptic literature," comes from the Greek word for Revelation; "apokalupsis," and it literally means to expose in full view what was formerly hidden, unveiled, or secret."⁸ One could surmise the intended purpose of the book of Revelations simply by the meaning of the name. In Revelations Jesus is more than the object of the information in Revelation; but seen as the one who is revealed, the instrument by means of which the revelation was given, the subject of the revelation and the possessor of the revelation. This is important to grasp because it is a prophecy and fulfillment of Old Testament work that is coming to past. It is a reminder that through Christ God will bring his family safely to eternal life.

In typical apocalyptic literature, many symbols are used, and many individuals believe that it is presented in the form of fantasy rather than reality.⁹ And this is where the dilemma in interpreting the book of Revelation surface. For many, the difficulty is deciphering the questions of what should be taken as symbols and what is to be taken literally? An inquiry into the aforementioned is where most of the conflict originates as it pertains to the multiplicity of millennial views. The word "millennium" comes from the Latin words "mille" (thousand) and "annus" (year). The New Testament was originally written in Greek, so John wrote this expression as "reigned with him a thousand years." The Greek word "thousand" is translated "chilias." Therefore, a belief in a millennial reign is called either millennialism or chiliasm.

8 O. D MS. BELL, *HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR GOD?: What the 7 churches in revelation teach us about our... salvation* (S.l.: WESTBOW PRESS, 2017).

9 Fee, 233.

There are three different understandings regarding millennialism. The first point of view is called the amillennial view. The prefix “a” means “no” or “none,” amillennialism is the view that there will be no literal reign of Christ on the earth for 1,000 years.¹⁰ The amillennial view in essence, is a disavowal of a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth after His second advent.¹¹ The amillennial view, deems one thousand to be a symbolic number designating an extensive period of time. Amillennialism is frequently portrayed as a “spiritualization” of the text. This view assigns a considerable value to reinterpreting Old Testament truth according to the revelation of the New Testament text. As such, they suppose that the New Testament is the foundation for all events of Christ’s second coming. This “day” according to the amillennial view is a diminutive period in which all these events come to pass at once. Additionally, as Christopher Scott asserts in his blog *3 Views on the Millennial Kingdom*, the guarantee of the Old Testament for Israel to take the promised land is no longer binding, but instead, it is now promised to the “elect in Christ.”¹² What can be confusing about amillennialist is the fact that at times this view takes a spiritual view of the Scripture, yet at other times it takes a literal view of the Biblical text. For instance, it takes the meaning of “day” to be literal in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10, and “hour” to be literal in John 5:28-29. Seeing these two passages as “literal” indicates that the end times events will all take place at the same time. However, when coming to Revelations 11 and 20, they do not take the meaning of “year” to be literal.

The second millennial view is the postmillennial view. The prefix “post” means “after,” meaning that Christ’s second coming will occur after the millennium.¹³ The postmillennial view

10 Morgan, Ken And Carol. A Comparison of the Three Millennial Views. Accessed November 12, 2017. <http://rediscoveringthebible.com/MillennialViews.html>.

11 Walvoord, Location 4750.

12 Christopher, Scott. "3 Views on the Millennial Kingdom." June 15, 2015. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://christopherscottblog.com/3-views-millennial-kingdom/>

13 Ibid, Morgan.

is fundamentally formed on the idea that Christ will return at the end of the millennium, or the “golden age,” which will be a mounting righteousness and victory for the church. (Walvoord, John. Revelation (The John Walvoord Prophecy Commentaries) (Kindle Locations 4733-4734). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition. To some, postmillennialism is in some ways similar to amillennial interpretations in that it holds the millennium as the final triumph of the gospel in the present age. In Revelations, the author John Walvoord states, “MacArthur summarizes the view well: Postmillennialism teaches that before [Christ’s] return will come the best period in history so that Christ will return at the end of a long golden age of peace and harmony.”¹⁴

A few of the significant doctrines of this view are: the church is not the kingdom; however, it will bring in the kingdom by the gospel. Christ will not be on the earth during the kingdom, but He will return to the earth after the millennium, will not last necessarily for a literal 1,000 years. They think the church; not Israel, will obtain the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham and David in a spiritual sense. What can be a division of perplexity within this view is the fact that he postmillennialist believe that Christ already bound Satan when Christ came in the first century. If this were true, it would indicate that, and Satan still has authority over the world, but not in the same way that he did before Jesus came to earth in the first century AD.

Finally, the premillennial view. The word “pre” before the word “millennialism” is in reference to the time of Christ’s second coming as it relates to the millennium, and thus the term “premillennialism” refers to the millennium, which is a 1,000-year period preceded by Christ’s return to the earth.¹⁵ The premillennial stance believes that Jesus will establish his rule for a literal 1,000 years on earth followed by resurrection and judgment. This view maintains that Christ will come again at the beginning of the literal 1,000 years of his kingdom. All of this is

¹⁴ Walvoord, Locations 4808-4811.

¹⁵ Ibid, Morgan.

before the new heaven, and new earth are created. This 1,000 year kingdom is seen as a complete replacement of the conditions humans now experience on the earth. There are three stages of resurrection in the premillennial view: Christ, those who belong to Christ, who are raised at his coming, and the end of the kingdom as described in 2 Corinthians 15:23-24.¹⁶ Premillennialism believes that the New Testament clarifies possible meanings of Old Testament prophecies and texts. This is often called the “literal-historical-grammatical” interpretation of Scripture which emphasizes understanding the message of Scripture as a whole.

The premillennialist point of view has been viewed by many religious scholars as the view that best respects, historical interpretation, and it is also supported by the Biblical text. There are multiple prophecies in the Old Testament for the premillennial view. In Daniel, he assures the reader that the Messiah will build a kingdom, filling the entire earth, replacing all former empires. Many other prophecies can be found in Isaiah 2:2-4; 65:17-25; 66:18-23; Daniel 2:34-35, 44; and Micah 4:1-8. Relevant New Testament texts on the rapture are 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; and 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. Revelations 19-20 is the primary text used to understand Christ’s second coming as a literal 1,000-year reign on earth. The Jews knew these prophecies to refer to a future age on earth. They expected the Messiah to come and reign and bring these blessings. Jewish literature before and after Jesus expects a kingdom of God on earth. Jesus’ disciples seem to have assumed the same thing, as well.¹⁷

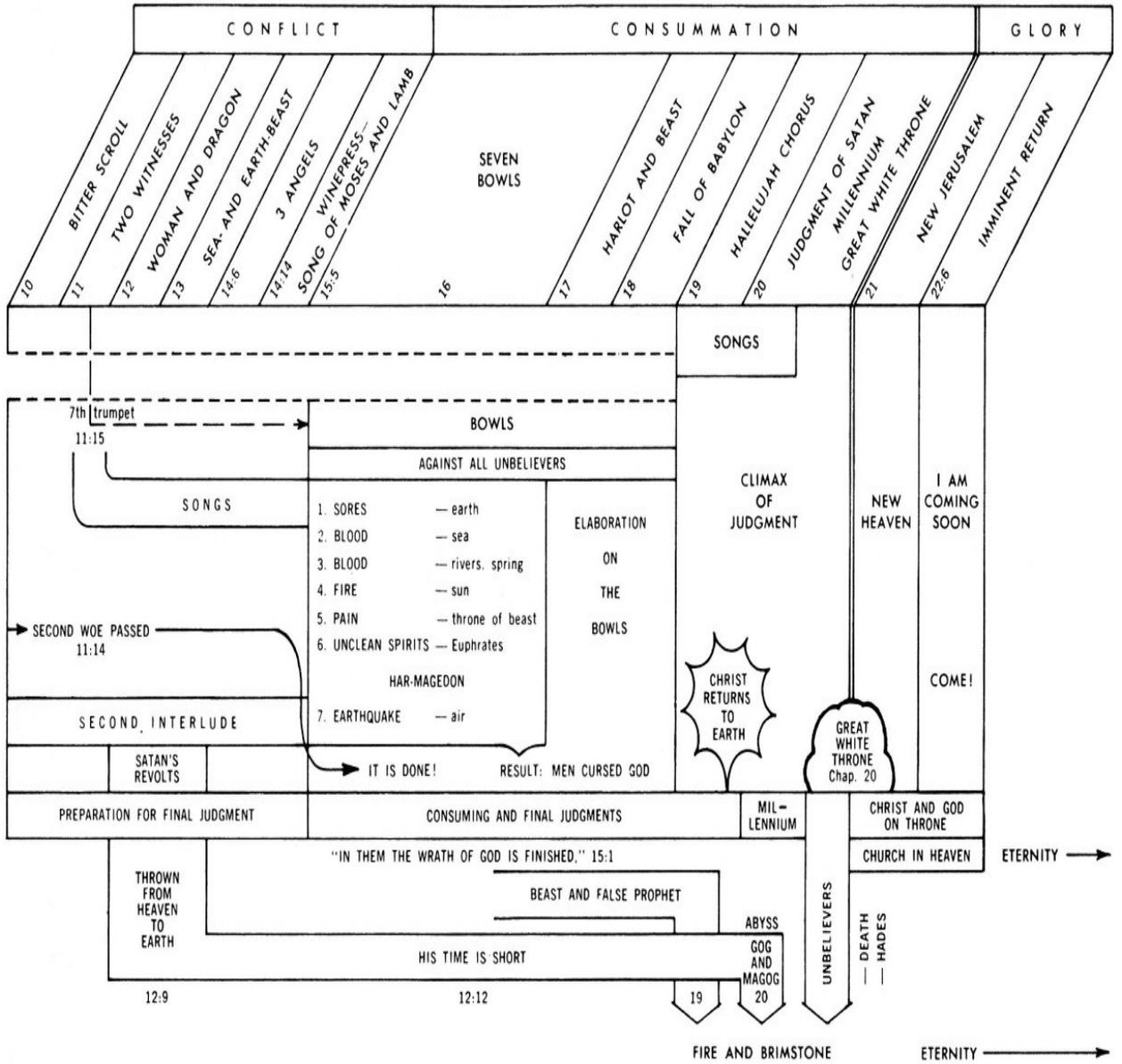
When Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, the Old Testament prophecies existed. The word “millennium,” meaning 1,000, occurs six times in key verses.¹⁸ Furthermore,

16 "Grace Communion International." Three Views of the Millennium | Grace Communion International. Accessed November 12, 2017. <https://www.gci.org/bible/rev/3views>.

17 "Grace Communion International." Three Views of the Millennium | Grace Communion International. Accessed November 12, 2017. <https://www.gci.org/bible/rev/3views>.

18 Ibid, Morgan.

there isn't any evidence that supports that in Scripture when the word "year" is used with a number its meaning was not literal. The resurrections mentioned in the New Testament clearly speak of physical bodily resurrections. Alluding to His kingdom is in existence now, in heaven and the hearts of men, but will be present on the earth during the millennium. Thus, His kingdom is both "now" and "not yet," realized and yet future. Although it seems that the way a person interprets the millennium is diametrically correlated to how Revelation is delineated because the point of view portrays many of the same periods of time in different ways; and though there are still ambiguities that surround the ongoing questions about Christ's return and the three-millennial views, based on the information provided the historical evidence supports premillennialism.



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